



## Office of Congressman Barney Frank

**For Immediate Release**  
**Thursday, September 22, 2011**

**Contact: Harry Gural**  
**Phone: (202) 225-9400**

### **Frank Intensifies Efforts to Cut Excessive Military Spending**

WASHINGTON – Congressman Barney Frank announced today that in coming weeks he will intensify his efforts to cut excessive military spending.

In mid-October, Frank plans to hold town hall meetings in Newton and in New Bedford, Massachusetts to discuss the issue. He will hold meetings with reporters and editors of several publications to discuss the subject. In interviews on deficit reduction negotiations, he will stress the point that military spending cuts must be on the table in order to reduce the deficit without deep and painful cuts to popular domestic programs.

Frank plans to be especially outspoken in his advocacy while the Congressional “super committee” continues negotiations on ways to reduce America’s debt. Recently, when Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona announced that he would quit the “super committee” if it considers cuts to military spending, Frank issued a statement concluding that intransigence on this issue will mean that “there will be no deficit reduction package.” (*The full statement is attached.*) When Defense Secretary Leon Panetta [claimed to a reporter](#) that there could be no further cuts to military spending, Frank addressed a letter to President Obama asking him to make clear that Panetta’s statement did not reflect administration policy. (*The letter is attached.*)

Frank will carry his message to people who may not realize the close connection between excessive military spending and their specific interests. Recently, at a large symposium for American bankers, he delivered a speech on financial reform and concluded with a discussion of the need to reduce the scale of America’s worldwide military commitments, arguing that subsidizing the defense of Europe and paying for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan weaken America’s economy and therefore the climate for businesses including banks.

In announcing his intensified efforts to address the issue of the debt and the struggling US economy through significant cuts to excessive military spending, Frank stated that:

We must remain the most powerful nation on earth militarily; we must defend ourselves against terrorism; we must protect our citizens and our national interests, and fully provide for our troops in the field. But we

must make a realistic assessment of our security needs. We can no longer be the world's policeman and we cannot afford to subsidize the defense of our wealthy allies. If we do not scale back our worldwide military commitments and the magnitude of our military spending, we cannot reduce the deficit without doing enormous harm both to our economy and to the quality of life in America.

Although military spending has long been considered a "sacred cow," the discussion has shifted in ways that would have been unthinkable only a year ago. Last January, the [New York Times reported](#) that the GOP, which for decades has been reflexively against cuts in military spending, is now becoming fractured on this issue. Bruce Bartlett, a former adviser to Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, recently penned an article titled "[Can We Afford the Military Budget?](#)"

In August, lawmakers agreed on an unprecedented debt-reduction deal which would automatically trigger significant cuts in military spending if the "super committee" cannot reach an agreement.

Frank's message has gained traction across the political spectrum because in recent months it has become clearer that in order to reduce the debt, Americans either must accept cuts in popular government services or accept increased taxes. The third option, which [according to polls](#) an increasing percent of the American public and also Members of Congress now finds attractive, is to make cuts in unnecessary military spending.

Frank, a long-time opponent of excessive military spending, began his current, strenuous effort on the issue in the spring of 2010, when he [joined with Republican Congressmen Ron Paul and Walter Jones, and with Democratic Senator Ron Wyden](#), to strongly urge the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform not to exempt military spending from its recommendations. That fall, Frank – now joined by over 50 Members of the House – [wrote a second letter to the deficit reduction commission](#) strongly requesting that it recommend "substantial reductions in the projected levels of future spending by the Department of Defense." Frank and his colleagues also convened an independent Sustainable Defense Task Force, [which issued a report](#) with specific recommendations about how to cut military expenditures without weakening national defense. In addition, Frank [co-authored an op-ed with Congressman Ron Paul](#) which appeared in the Huffington Post. He plans similar bipartisan initiatives in the near future.

In July, Frank offered an [amendment](#) on the House floor to the 2012 Defense Appropriations bill, which would cut by 50% the planned increase in non-emergency spending for the Department of Defense. However, the amendment would specifically prohibit that any cuts come from payroll and health benefits for current and retired servicemembers and employees. The measure came short of the 218 votes required for passage in the House, but 181 Members voted for it including [47 Republicans](#).

Over the past year, Frank has been interviewed about military spending many times on broadcast television and radio, including appearances on [CNN](#), [National Public Radio](#), [MSNBC](#), [CNBC](#), [CBS](#), [New England Cable News](#), [WGBH](#) and others.

